



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

"CRISES" IN THE LIFE OF REASON

CAN nature lift herself by her own boot-straps? Using the word "lift" in a eulogistic sense, the only meaning which can attach to this question is whether any one conformation of nature is better than any other. Now nature as a whole can show no progress, neither could she register it were it miraculously to occur. But a part of nature might conceivably play somewhat skillfully into the hands of another part, and by a union of effort effect a local improvement. Progress must of necessity be an episode, and in a world where better and worse are basal categories it must be a moral episode. For such an episode to be natural it would be necessary for nature to evolve her own values as well as devise a method for their operation. Inasmuch as such an episode appears at a definite juncture of time and portrays in its genesis a certain contingency, it is dramatic as well as moral. If we use the word reason to stand for the total embodied progress, not in nature as a whole, but in that part of nature which has somehow managed to rise above its source, we may say that the life of reason is not only an episode in man's career, but is also a moral drama.

In what has just been written it would be easy to recognize a conscious adoption of the point of view of Santayana. Santayana's *Life of Reason* is not only an affirmative answer to the question placed at the beginning of this essay, it is also in its literary form the most perfect and in philosophical acumen the most penetrating account of the natural history of reason with which I am familiar. The purpose of this paper is to review the first volume of the series, not in a spirit of criticism, but with the intention of describing the complications that arise in the development of reason. Being a dramatic episode, reason has its critical junctures and its resolutions. What I am especially interested to describe are the "crises" in the drama. Though uncritical, the exposition will exhibit at times a spirit of wariness. The constant use of such terms as "natural apparition," "familiar mystery," "speculative fable," "eddy in the current," "kindly illusion," "significant figment," "inveterate preference for form," "miracle of insight" begets a suspicion that Santayana might, after all, have attributed to nature something of the art of the prestidigitator.

When Glaucon and Adeimantus approach Socrates with the ques-

tion, does it pay to be moral? they are careful to make it plain that they do not doubt that virtue and utility are inseparably connected; only, they say, they have never yet heard the thesis that justice is more gainful than injustice defended in a satisfactory manner. Now I do not doubt that reason has a natural history and that ideals have a natural basis. Neither do I doubt that if man is to recognize the forces which govern his life they "must portray themselves in human experiences."¹ But to accept and justify these forces just as they are given and to praise them for their loveliness as is done, for example, by Lucretius, is to mark at once both the value and the limits of naturalism. The poetry of Lucretius, says Santayana, is "not the poetry of a poet about things, but the poetry of things themselves."² The operations of nature stand in no need of idealization; the interplay of its mechanical forces lends itself as much to poetic expression as to scientific formulation. Not in transforming nature into something more ideal than herself, but in conforming to her as the pattern of all beauty and excellence, is to be found man's task. Resignation in some form is the unescapable issue of a mechanistic conception of nature and life. But to make an ideal of conformity is to renounce the imagination and to resign our humanity. We exalt nature in order to humiliate man.

If naturalism is "sad," idealism is "rudimentary" and transcendentalism is "insolent." As young children do not distinguish their images from things external, the idealist mistakes the visions of the imagination for a perfect and eternal reality. To think oneself omniscient is a mark of immaturity, but to mistake the stirrings of impulse for the creative energies of nature is a colossal piece of human impudence.

But the forces within us do somehow carry us to things beyond us. Our primitive instincts no less than our "leaps" of thought have a transcendent reach. The persistent striving of an impulse is the substance of things hoped for and its concomitant emotion is the evidence of things not seen. To foster and maintain an interest, and to generate a force that can conceive and pursue it, is nature's way of rising above her source. Reason is the process by means of which man realizes ideals. We have ideals, because, being human, we need them. If naturalism, by withholding ideals, gives us too little, idealism, by objectifying them as structural elements inwrought into the framework of existence, gives us too much. Between these extremes lies the "illusionism" of Santayana, not sad, though wistful; not rudimentary, but significant; not insolent, but kindly. Ideals, originating in human nature and ministering to human needs, are legiti-

¹ *Life of Reason*, Vol. I, p. 1.

² *Three Philosophical Poets*, p. 34.

mate to the extent that they are generous and real as far as they are revelant. It is not surprising, therefore, to be told that ideals constitute the realm of "significant figments" and "kindly illusions." An important caution must always be observed touching the legitimacy of ideals. To idealize the natural is not the same thing as to naturalize the ideal. Every ideal is a work of art and final causes nowhere exist in nature. Aristotle's deity is a legitimate formulation of a moral aspiration, but as a physical principle of natural efficiency it is altogether deceptive. To express our aspirations in "speculative fables" is the crowning work of reason, but to deify an abstraction or to rationalize a myth is to open the way for dogmatism and deception. The reverse process is less kindly and more illusory.

At the outset we may dispel "transcendental qualms." All of the principles of synthesis and evaluation necessary for a natural history of reason are discoverable within experience itself. "The most irresponsible vision has certain principles of order and valuation by which it estimates itself; and in these principles the Life of Reason is already broached, however halting may be its development. We should lead ourselves out of our dream, as the Israelites were led out of Egypt, by the promise and eloquence of the dream itself."³ Experience is no enthymeme. The premises from which it is derived and the conclusion which it yields can be discovered by any one who is sufficiently gifted to discern them. A natural explanation is one which accounts for a fact by referring it to other facts which belong to the same order of existence. For Thales to have said that the earth floats on water is at least better than saying that it rests on the shoulders of Atlas. "Early experience knows no mystery which is not somehow rooted in transformations of the natural world." For Santayana, as for the Greeks whom he reveres, absolute qualitative change is unthinkable. Reason must, therefore, have its natural antecedents.

We begin with the immediate, thanks to Heraclitus⁴ who was the first to descry it. What the immediate reveals is impulse and imagination, two pre-existing and primordial processes, the union of which constitutes reason. Upon the advent of reason, life is already swiftly moving toward impulsive and instinctive ends. Side by side with the life of impulse and equally vital is the life of imagination, a dreamful existence far more fundamental than anything so sophisticated as perception. Originally these operations of nature go on in ignorance of each other. It is unfortunate, for each possesses

³ *Life of Reason*, Vol. I, p. 54.

⁴ The brilliant characterization of Heraclitus (Vol. I, p. 15) is somewhat misleading. In his appeal to reason and in his blending of naturalism and humanism, he is much more than the "honest prophet of immediacy."

what the other lacks. Impulse has power, but is blind; imagination has vision, but is impotent. Promordial consciousness is disinterested, entirely speculative, and as a result is altogether improvident. Reason arises when consciousness asserts a preference. By choosing among objects, it discovers itself. It comes to take an interest in itself for the sake of the object it prefers. The accident by means of which ideas, which originally have no relevance to action, attach themselves to impulse, thus giving potency to vision and foresight to power, is nothing less than the birth of reason.

Heraclitus began with the immediate; he also ended with it. One day is as another was the burden of his lament. Could he have come after Plato he might have arrested the flux with a figure of speech. In this respect Santayana is more fortunate. "When the flux manages to form an eddy and to maintain by breathing and nutrition what we call a life, it affords some slight foothold and object for thought and becomes in a measure like the ark in the desert, a moving habitation for the eternal."⁵

Coextensive with every alternation in impulsive and ideational life is a tone of feeling. Pleasure and pain, or as we should now say with a more strict psychological accuracy, affections of pleasantness and unpleasantness, are invariable accompaniments of every phase of immediate experience. Herein lies the possibility of discrimination and preference. That pleasure is worthy of choice is an ultimate fact. One needs no transcendent obligation to persuade him to enjoy himself. It is not a question of the worth of pleasure, seeing that pleasure is itself the basis of all worth. Selection on the basis of a felt preference is the first differentiation in the flux.

Just pleasure and pain do not constitute rationality. But when once the source of value is revealed, consciousness can no longer remain disinterested. A further step is taken when ideas attach themselves to pleasure. Here interest awakens. The half-born reason welcomes returning joys and trembles before impending sorrows. As ideas suffuse pleasures, pleasures somehow overflow and attach themselves to objects. "Here we come upon a crisis." What happens, we are told, is that pleasures become objectified, they saturate the object which happens to come along just in the nick of time. Pleasures affiliate with the objects which cause them. As a result objects can be named and their recurrence predicted. Thus arises the concept of causality. Causality does not arise from any malicious intent on the part of reason to fix the blame for its distress or in any feeling of gratitude for favors received. Its origin lies solely in the fortunate eccentricity of pleasure to affiliate with its source. It might have been entirely different, thus showing that

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

the life of reason is after all only a natural contingency. Just here, I suppose, is Santayana's justification for calling the life of reason a dramatic episode. Pleasures and pains, therefore, become the links that bind impulse and imagination together. Henceforth their destinies are bound up in the same process. Ideas become factors in action. We know not things directly but only through the intervention of the pleasures they afford us.

When imagination connects up with impulse it joins hands with a body well on in its evolution. The body has aims and needs. Every attitude is an incipient courtesy and every gesture is a social response. Imagination falls in with this purposeful activity already well launched. It makes no attempt to graft its own aims on to the body; it does not because it hasn't any. Imagination has no interests; only bodies have that. The function of the imagination is to conceive ends, not to possess them. In a sense consciousness remains disinterested still, its only interest being to assist the body to an awareness of the ends which it already possesses though has not as yet foreseen. Impulse needs no incentive and what consciousness brings is not efficiency but light.

Reason is now born and an external world is discovered. We are told *how* all this happens. But why does consciousness, which is a "born hermit," turn its most prized possessions out of doors? To explain this we can not simply revert to a primitive animism, since it is animism itself that is in need of explanation. Santayana begins as does Descartes with the inner life and works outward to the discovery (or invention? or apparition?) of nature. Does he really escape subjectivism? A discussion of this question would take us too far afield. It is merely suggested as a real difficulty in Santayana's analysis. Furthermore it seems to me that the separation of impulses and pleasures and ideas, even allowing for the literary effect, involves a false abstraction. Activity is a single and indivisible process with ideation, affection and conation as inseparable phases. But let us continue with the exposition.

The recognition of stray and random objects falls far short of a general theory of nature. A further step is taken in this direction. Consciousness is not only a "born hermit," it is also a born conservative. Though the new-born reason is everywhere confronted with surprise, for in strict literalness no element of the immediate ever recurs, reason itself has no sense for novelty. The same back again is its continual lament. To maintain a life of sentience on a rational plan requires two things: that pleasures return and be as they were. And what sentience requires, reason proclaims, namely, independence of objects in order "to normalize their recurrence," and a settled character or form in order "to normalize their constitution."

Independence and form are the two conceptions in terms of which nature is discovered and unified. How do these conceptions arise?

The question, how is knowledge possible? has always had great fascination for philosophers. It is a legitimate question. Born into a world not expressly designed for it, yet there, if anywhere, reason must find a home. Though in its later career it may, through misfortune or disillusionment, come to renounce the world, in its infancy at least it is loyal to its lineage. Out of this loyalty arises the means of converting the world into a home for the spirit. Thinking is a form of life. As a vital process, it must like all life's other processes, maintain itself by extracting from its environment the means of its own conservation. The new-born reason can not feed on the flux. The immediate is not food for thought. The process by means of which thought derives its sustenance is a sort of living on its own past. The past never recurs, but something of its being is retained and utilized in the present. The mind, having an "inveterate preference" for form, singles out the quality and lets the quantity go. It is thus that experience becomes accumulative. It is not a mechanical process of addition, but a vital process of nutrition. Only a growing experience can sustain and nourish the process of thinking. Form or essence is, therefore, the food prepared by a voracious intellect by its own assertive energy. The mind is not endowed with form, it only possesses a preference for form; it does not possess categories, only a tendency to categorize. No "transcendental ego" is needed. The demand for that *deus ex machina* is the result of treating thought mechanically rather than vitally. Plasticity and modifiability of nervous tissue is all that is required. Epistemology is a branch of physiology.

This may be expressed differently. Transcendence, not immediacy, is the crux of thinking. How what is present can imply what is absent is just one of those "familiar mysteries" inexplicable but factual. Suggestion is just as much a natural operation as digestion. It can neither be intelligible nor unintelligible, since it is the nature of intelligence itself that is being considered. All that we can say is that if what is implied were present in the same sense as that which implies it, there would no longer be implication, but explication. Neither would there be thought. Implication is a sort of mist of meaning that rises above the stream of sentience, as natural as evaporation; and like evaporation, involving a distilled essence which in good season will return and enliven the source from which it first arose.

The only possible issue of Santayana's theory of knowledge is in mechanism. Mechanism, being the basis of intelligibility, is one and the same thing as explanation. The unification of all of those

ideal terms by means of which reason dominates and controls the flux, assigning to it independence and permanence, constitutes the realm of nature. Nature, therefore, is ideal. And since it arises in response to the demand for explanation, it is a purely mechanical system. Reason prescribes its laws. Only ideals are real, real in the only sense in which they can be real without losing their ideality. We have a knowledge of them as we know any goal of thought, not as a sign, but as a thing signified. Sentiency can no more be sentient of the ideal than the given can be implied or the absent be present. The confusion of the ideal with the sentient is the basis of dogmatism, the most deceptive form of reification. That is why, though it is never wrong to pass from the sentient to the ideal, it is never right to reverse the process. As Hume would have said, you can have no *a priori* knowledge about matters of fact.

Nature disclosed is mind discerned. Reason's discovery of mind is not reason's discovery of itself. It is the discovery of that vague realm suspended between nature and sentiency. Nature is that part of existence that has been reduced to constancy and control. The discovery of mind marks reason's inability to subdue the flux all at once. Despite the advance of mechanism an element of caprice persists and seems to stand outside of the order of nature. Nature is mechanism; mind is the residuum of the indeterminate, the realm of the unpredictable. Santayana might have expressed the discovery of mind in a simpler way. A part of the ideal of perfection, he tells us, is that all ideas be applicable in action. The discovery of mind marks the failure of this ideal. Imagination, a form of life, like other vital processes, is prolific. It produces countless ideas with the hope that some one of them by attaching itself to impulse may become fruitful in action. Reason must take some notice of those ideas which fail to connect with impulse. Never leaving the realm of the imagination they can never enter the realm of nature. They are untrustworthy because they are untried.

When we say, love your neighbor as yourself, we assume the independent existence of a neighborly spirit. But for reason there was a problem of discovering fellow-minds before there was a problem of loving them. Now the discoveries of reason, no less than those of science, are often entirely accidental. It could not be otherwise with a subject-matter that is irrational and a method that is experimental. The discovery that other men have minds is a pure accident. It could have happened only to a rudimentary consciousness. Sophistication always leads to solipsism. Mature reflection, seeing that no idea can be transferred from one mind to another, would be sure to deny any such thing as mental interaction on intellectual grounds. Consequently, had fellow-minds not been revealed to emotional con-

sciousness at a time before reason learned the use of dialectic they would never have been revealed at all. Already we have seen that but for an emotional overflow, external objects would never have been discovered. It is easy to go one step further and turn the objectified feeling into a principle of natural efficiency. Now the "pathetic fallacy" is usually fallacious, but there is one case when it is not, namely, when it happens to be true. Truth must of necessity be an accident in the trial-and-error method. The discovery of other minds comes as the natural result of "varied reaction" when applied to emotional life. Prompted by a vague and indistinct feeling for personal presence, rudimentary consciousness puts out various tentacles one of which, as if by a "miracle of insight," touches the projection of a similar consciousness similarly groping.

This, in outline, is the natural history of reason. It includes the following steps: (1) Antecedents in impulse and imagination; (2) the basal character of pleasure and pain, preference asserted and value revealed; (3) the attachment of ideas to pleasures and the projection of pleasures to objects, interest awakened; (4) the rise of the concept of causality and the external world discerned; (5) explanation required, a theory of knowledge proclaimed, and nature discovered and unified; (6) the discovery of fellow-minds. Inasmuch as results are never mistaken for causes and values never confused with origins, the account is a model of natural description. Were there space in which to add criticism to the foregoing exposition, it would be directed along three main lines. First, a false abstraction, more than merely rhetorical, involved in the separation of impulse, feeling and ideation. Secondly, can one, beginning with the inner life of feeling, the domain where a "stranger intermeddled not," escape subjectivism? Thirdly, by attributing to mind a preference for form and by assigning to reason the function of legislating for nature, is Santayana as far from Kantianism as he thinks he is?

M. T. McCLURE.

TULANE UNIVERSITY.

THE COÖRDINATE CHARACTER OF FEELING AND COGNITION

ONE of the vexed questions of psychology that troubles the philosopher who would describe the nature of conscious activity is the disputed status of feeling-states. Fourteen years ago C. Stumpf¹ indicated the three possible views in respect to the status of pleasure and displeasure. Feeling may be a quality of sensation (so H. R. Marshall); feeling may be a mental element coördinate

¹ *Zeitschr. für Psych.*, Vol. 44, pp. 1-49, 1906.